IN THE CLAIMS:

Kindly rewrite Claims 1-12 as follows:

Claims 1-11 (Canceled).

12. (Currently amended) A method for producing L- threonine ~~which comprises~~comprising:

A) cultivating in a culture medium an L-threonine-producing bacterium belonging to the genus *Escherichia,* wherein the bacterium has been modified to enhance the activity of aspartate aminotransferase,~~the bacterium of claim 1 in a culture medium to produce and accumulate L-threonine in the culture medium~~, and

B) collecting the L-threonine from the culture medium.

13. (new) The method of claim 12, wherein said activity of aspartate aminotransferase is enhanced by increasing the expression of an aspartate aminotransferase gene.

14. (new) The method of claim 12, wherein said activity of aspartate aminotransferase is increased by a method selected from the group consisting of increasing the copy number of the aspartate aminotransferase gene, and modifying an expression control sequence of said gene so that the expression of said gene is enhanced.

15. (new) The method according to claim 14, wherein said activity of aspartate aminotransferase is increased by increasing the copy number of the aspartate aminotransferase gene.

16. (new) The method of claim 15, wherein the copy number is increased by transforming said bacterium with a low copy number vector containing said gene.

17. (new) The method of claim 13, wherein said aspartate aminotransferase gene is originated from a bacterium belonging to the genus *Escherichia.*

18. (new) The method of claim 13, wherein said aspartate aminotransferase gene encodes a protein selected from the group consisting of:

(A) a protein comprising the amino acid sequence shown in SEQ ID NO: 2; and

(B) a protein comprising an amino acid sequence including deletion, substitution, insertion, or addition of one or several amino acids in the amino acid sequence shown in SEQ ID NO: 2, and which has an activity of aspartate aminotransferase.

19.(new) The method of claim 13, wherein said aspartate aminotransferase gene comprises DNA selected from the group consisting of:

(a) a DNA comprising a nucleotide sequence of the nucleotides 1 to 1191 in SEQ

ID NO: 1; and

(b) a DNA which is hybridizable with a nucleotide sequence of the nucleotides 1-1191 in SEQ ID NO:1 or a probe which can be prepared from said nucleotide sequence under stringent conditions, and codes for a protein having an activity of aspartate aminotransferase.

20. (new) The method of claim 19, wherein said stringent conditions comprise washing at 60°C and at a salt concentration corresponding to 1 x SSC and 0.1 % SDS.

21. (new) The method of claim 13, wherein said bacterium has been further modified to enhance expression of a gene selected from the group consisting of

a) the mutant *thrA* gene which codes for aspartokinase homoserine dehydrogenase I resistant to feed back inhibition by threonine,

b) the *thrB* gene, which codes for homoserine kinase,

c) the *thrC* gene, which codes for threonine synthase,

d) the *rhtA* gene, which codes for putative transmembrane protein, and

e) and combinations thereof.

22. (new) The method of claim 21, wherein said bacterium has been modified to increase expression of said mutant *thrA* gene, said *thrB* gene, said *thrC* gene, and said *rhtA* gene.